

# GOT LIFE PLANS?

## LET'S TALK **HEALTH CARE PROXY** – WHAT IS IT AND WHY SHOULD I CARE?

**ONCE YOU TURN 18, YOU ARE LEGALLY AN ADULT AND OTHERS DO NOT HAVE THE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO MAKE HEALTH CARE DECISIONS FOR YOU. A HEALTH CARE PROXY (OR HEALTHCARE ADVOCATE) IS SOMEONE YOU TRUST TO MAKE MEDICAL DECISIONS FOR YOU IF YOU CANNOT MAKE THEM YOURSELF, LIKE IF YOU ARE UNCONSCIOUS OR UNABLE TO SPEAK FOR YOURSELF. MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW THE HEALTH CARE PROXY'S DECISIONS.**

### HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?



- Must be at least **18** years old
- **Trustworthy**
- **Respects** your healthcare wishes/plans
- **Reliable** and will be there when you need them

### WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

- You have the **right to choose** your health care proxy or healthcare advocate. *(It doesn't have to be a parent/guardian.)*
- You can **change your mind** later.
- You can **talk to a trusted adult** about making this decision.

### YOU ARE EMPOWERED!

- A health care proxy or healthcare advocate is about **having a plan** in case of an emergency.
- **It's your choice.** No one can make you do it, but it means someone has your back if the need arises.
- Don't make a rushed decision. Think about it over time and **take time** to process what the decision means for you.

### REMEMBER ...



It's normal to be unsure! It is a **big decision** and there are lots of things to consider. A **supportive adult** can help you talk through things, like:

- **What if** you don't want someone to make decisions for you?
- **What if** you don't know who to choose?
- **What if** you want to change your health care proxy or healthcare advocate?



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